TPS
TRANSILVANIA
PITCH STOP

TRANSILVANIA PITCH STOP

BOOK OF PROJECTS 2022

TIFF.21

CONTENTS

TUTORS **4**

WORKSHOP PROJECTS **5**

40, MARIA LUISA BOULEVARD 6

AS SHADOWS FADE 8

AVANOS 10

CHILDREN OF THE GODS 12

LIGHT 14

LO-FI 16

MONARCH 19

PSYCHO-SEXUAL THOUGHTS 22

SASHA-OLEKSANDA 24

WHERE ELEPHANTS GO? 26

TRANSILVANIA PITCH STOP

At Transilvania Pitch Stop, ten projects in development will be presented to industry professionals (producers, distributors, sales agents, representatives of film funds & more) at the Transilvania Pitch Stop (TPS) this year. The 9th edition of the program includes the presentation of projects in front of potential partners and financiers on the 23th of June, during Transilvania International Film Festival (June 17 – 26, Cluj-Napoca, Romania).

TPS aims to discover a strong selection of projects from Romania and the countries around Romania destined for European co-production such as: Bulgaria, Greece, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine. The program aims to foster cross-border cooperation especially between the Black Sea countries and the neighboring countries eligible for the program. Over 80 projects were selected during the last editions of TPS, a lot of which were screened and awarded at major festivals around the world. The most recent TPS project that got international recognition is Ukrainian director Maksym Nakonechnyi's debut feature Butterfly Vision, that was selected in the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes 2022. Butterfly Vision won The Romanian National Film Center Award at TPS in 2019.

This year, five projects will benefit from a tailored script consulting provided by script editor & film consultant Christian Routh, while all projects will be coached by the renowned pitching consultant and film producer Agathe Berman prior to their presentation.
Oscar Alonso (Latido Films), Patra Spanou (Patra Spanou Film) and Yohann Cornu (Damned Films) are the members of the international jury who will hand out the awards.

TUTORS

Agathe Berman

a.k.a The Pitchologist, is a slash figure: pitch expert/producer/writer/teacher/artistic consultant.

She trains international film industry PITCHING SESSIONS - SeriesMania Lille Coproduction forum, Unifrance TV Division events, Torino Film Lab, Haifa Film Festival, MIA Rome, Cine Ventana Madrid, Balkan Film Market, Odessa Film Festival, La Sodec - Canada, Creative Europe, EWA; and pitching workshops - Eureka SeriesMania Institute, MidPoint programme, Documentary and Series classes in La Femis, Paris...
In Paris art school Atelier de Sèvres, she preps students for written and spoken assignments of international art College exams.
She has produced over sixty films as a partner of high-end Paris-based Films d'Ici.
Her credits include award-winning productions directed by talents such as Cédric Klapisch, Richard Copans, Louise Hémon, Gilles Bannier and Christophe Honoré.
Since 2018, with her company – AgatheBermanStudio – she has been developing her "pitchology" expertise, along with film essays, mixed-media projects, exhibitions' scripts.
Trained in Polygram Fastlane Media Program (London, Los Angeles), mastered in linguistics, cinema & media (Paris Sorbonne).

Christian Routh

Christian is a story analyst and film consultant based in Catalonia, Spain. From there he works for various filmmakers, state institutions, and training programs.

For the past 16 years he has been co-head of studies of the Creative Europe supported development scheme SCRIPTEAST (www.scripteast.pl), serving Eastern European filmmakers. Fifty feature films have been produced during his time there.
Recently he has been tutoring at workshops in USA, Mexico, and Spain. In 2019 he instigated an M.A. in screenwriting at Pinewood Film Studios in the UK. He has also been working with national funding agencies in Eastern Europe, with workshops in the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Macedonia, Georgia, Romania, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. For 15 years he was a tutor at the Binger Film Lab in Amsterdam, and in 2012, he initiated the first HEZAYAH screenwriting workshops in Qatar, which he ran for 5 years.
From its inception in 2008 until 2012 he was head of studies of a European film school initiative called FOUR CORNERS. Before that that he held the same post at the PILOTS TV workshops in Sitges, Spain. In 2006, Christian was the co-author of a book called 'Script Development'.
Before moving to Spain in 2000 from his native London, he was head of selection at the MEDIA Programme's European Script Fund and EMDA, from 1989 until 1998. Whilst there he helped support hundreds of European films and companies, including 'Toto le Hero', 'Orlando', 'Breaking the Waves', and 'Elizabeth'. Prior to that he had been a film buyer and development executive with Thorn-EMI, Cannon UK, and Red Rooster Films.

WORKSHOP PROJECTS

THE 10 FEATURE PROJECTS SELECTED

40, MARIA LUISA BOULEVARD

Director: **Kristina Spassovska**
Country: **Bulgaria**

Producer: **Maya Vitkova-Kosev**
Production company: **Viktoria Films**

Sofia, a 36-year-old Bulgarian, returns to her childhood home for her father's funeral, where ghostly events start unraveling the missing pieces of her life.

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SYNOPSIS

After years of living abroad, Sofia returns to Bulgaria for her father's funeral. The two of them have not spoken ever since the mysterious disappearance of Sofia's brother, which subsequently led to her departure. While settling the affairs of the deceased one, Sofia experiences a number of supernatural situations - her father's ghost appears, all his clothes vanish and strange animals show up in weird places... All this, along with the administrative delays, urges Sofia to stay in her old home for the forty days of mourning and unveil the reason why her late father cannot find peace.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In the last conversation with my grandfather, who used to live at 40, Maria Luisa Blvd., I asked if he was afraid of death. He replied that death does not exist. My grandfather died soon after, on top of his birthday...

"40, Maria Luisa Boulevard" will be my debut feature - a drama, mystery, and a ghost story. Although death is a central theme, the

ghosts will bring a dose of absurdity and humour. "40, Maria Luisa Boulevard" will be an intimate film set in one main location - Sofia's home. The apartment plays a key role, as it represents a collective image of the family and helps the main character to catch the fleeting glimpses of the afterlife.
My aim is to explore how the past forms an unbreakable link to our present.

Producer's note

When Kristina told me the story of 40, Maria Luisa Blvd. and asked if I would like to produce it, I did not hesitate. I like the presence of fish in the bathtub, roosters in the living room and pigs in the hallway, ghosts of deceased relatives in the home and life of the main character Sofia. I recognize favourite stories from cinema and literature, which will further help us position the project.

The apartment at 40, Maria Luisa Blvd., where we will shoot, is the house where Kristina grew up. The prototype of Sofia's father is Kristina's grandfather, who recently passed away... The emotional load and the director's urge to tell this story are strong.
I firmly believe the story has both festival and commercial potential.

Director's bio

Kristina Spassovska is a writer-director based in Sofia, Bulgaria. She graduated from EICAR (Paris) in 2018 with the short film Motherland, selected at the Zagreb Film Festival and Sofia Film Festival, among others, and awarded with the Film Critics Prize at the Kutaisi Short Film Festival. Kristina is currently in preproduction of a short film supported by the Bulgarian National Culture Fund. Her two following projects are both funded by the Bulgarian National Film Center - the short film The Reptiles (Bulgaria-France), winner of the best script award at the 18th Bulgarian Film Society Competition 2020, and her debut feature film 40, Maria Luisa Boulevard, both produced by Maya Vitkova-Kosev and her company Viktoria Films.

Producer's bio

Maya Vitkova-Kosev is a writer-director and producer born in Sofia, Bulgaria. In 2008 she executive produced Kamen Kalev's Eastern Plays, which premiered at the Cannes Directors' Fortnight. In 2009 Maya founded Viktoria Films, producing and directing two short films, written by the Golden Bear winner Radu Jude, and her debut film Viktoria, which was the first Bulgarian feature in competition at the Sundance Film Festival. Maya is currently in development of five features, supported by the Bulgarian National Film Center for development and/or production, among them Afrika, developed at Cinelink, ScripTeast (winner of the Krzysztof Kieslowski ScripTeast Award 2018), the Sundance Screenwriters Lab 2018 and the TIFF Filmmaker Lab 2019.

Company profile

In 2008 Maya Vitkova executive produced Eastern Plays by Kamen Kalev. The film premiered at the 62nd Cannes International Film Festival's Director's Fortnight. Eastern Plays was nominated for the LUX award, in the official selection of the European Film Awards and was Bulgaria's candidate for the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar.
In 2009 Maya founded Viktoria Films, producing and directing two shorts written by Radu Jude, and her feature film Viktoria.
Viktoria was selected for the Script & Pitch Workshops, Balkan Fund, Berlinale Talent Project Market, NIPKOW Programm, EKRAN Programme and Phare Workshop. Viktoria was supported by the MEDIA Programme, Vienna Film Fund and the Bulgarian National Film Center.

AS SHADOWS FADE

Director: **Burcu Aykar**
Country: **Turkey**

Producers: **Nadir Öperli, Liman Film, Müge Özen, Solis Film, Anke Petersen, Jyoti Film**
Project awarded at Meetings on the Bridge 2022

Trapped by the Turkish traditional, heteronormative family ideal, Esin lives unaware of her passions. When she falls for the fiery Deniz, a distant family friend who takes refuge in their house, their intimacy pushes her to transcend her boundaries towards a dark place of secrets and heartache.

Attending TIFF:

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Synopsis

Esin (27), a literature class teacher has a gloomy life with her father Taner (55). Everything begins with the arrival of Deniz (21), the daughter of Aunt Aliye who was like a sister to Esin's mother, until they had a row and falling out, long before Esin's mother's death. After getting into a university in the city where Esin lives, Deniz asks to take shelter in their home, to attend her studies. At first Esin is reluctant to let her stay. However, Deniz, with her warmth and vivacity, changes the atmosphere in the house; Taner seems happier and Esin cannot reject her demands. As much as Esin is cold, distanced and joyless, Deniz is passionate and cheerful. Deniz awakens Esin to the existence of side roads, possibilities and hopes in life.

Director's note

I envision As Shadows Fade to be an atmospheric, haptic, oneiric film where I will focus on visualizing the main character, Esin's, internal world as she tries to find out if what she lived with Deniz was love. The structure of the film resembles a walk

through Esin's mind. As she tries to discover where Deniz is and what she really felt, Esin travels from memory to memory. Scenes from different timelines are connected by a logic of association, linked with shared sounds, objects and emotions. I'm interested in narrating about feelings, relationships, situations that are vague and ambiguous, that are not easily describable with words and that can best be described by images.

Producer's note

As producers, we were both moved when we watched Burcu's award-winning short film, My Sister (2019). She had such an intricate way of capturing the little moments of envy, loss and yearning. The novel, "As Shadows Fade" is full of these moments which seem so mundane and ordinary yet they make up the vast inner world of our main character Esin. We think Burcu is the perfect director and writer to capture these moments on screen and create one of the most layered female characters of Turkish cinema. We have received development funding from Ankara Film Festival and German-Turkish Co-Production Fund with our German co-producer Jyoti Film. Our aim is to get a third co-production country on board, apply to Eurimages and shoot in late 2023.

Director's bio

Born in 1977, Burcu Aykar graduated from the Psychology department of Bosphorus University and got her master's degree in Film Studies at the University of Southampton.
She worked as an editor at the Turkish film magazine Sinema, beginning her career as a film critic in 2000. She worked as a distributor of independent arthouse films for two years. She was the editor in chief of Total Film Turkey from 2006 to 2008. She co-wrote and co-directed two short films, Birth (Doğum, 2008) and Death (Ölüm, 2009) with Uygar Şirin. She has done jury work as a film critic of the Turkish Film Critics Association, a member of FIPRESCI, until 2015. She continues to write for the monthly cinema magazine Altyazı. Last short film is My Sister (Ablam, 2019).

Producer's bio

Muge graduated from the Faculty of Communication, Galatasaray University in 2005. She has worked in film acquisition. In 2012, she joined AC Film where she still works as a producer. She founded Solis Film in June 2015 and completed the 2017 EAVE Producers Workshop. Under the label Solis Cinema Sessions, she has been offering training programs to filmmakers. Muge was the co-director of the 2021 edition of co-production market, Antalya Film Forum.

Company profile

Following his experience in founding Bulut Film, where he produced Seyfi Teoman's Summer Book and Our Grand Despair, Theron Patterson's Dark Cloud and Aslı Özge's Lifelong, Nadir Öperli founded his own company Liman Film. The company's first titles were Emine Emel Balcı's Until I Lose My Breath (Berlinale Forum, 2015), Emin Alper's Frenzy (Venice Competition, 2015), Ahmet Necdet Çupur's Les Enfants Terribles. Latest title Burning Days (2022) by Emin Alper was in competition in Un Certain Regard at the Festival de Cannes.

AVANOS

Director: **Panagiotis Charamis,**
Country: **Greece**

Producer: **Konstantinos Baliotis**
Production company: **2D2R**

An ex-convict returns to his hometown after 10 years in prison, in order to ask for his share while he was away, only to soon realise that the price he has to pay is much higher than what he had expected.

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Synopsis

Avanos is a modern Greek tragedy that takes place near the borders between Greece and Turkey, Europe and Asia as a neo-western. It tells the story of Tasos, an ex-convict in his 40s, who returns to his small hometown after doing 10 years in prison for a murder he committed. His only goal is to claim his share of the money his family made from smuggling near the river by the borders, while he was doing his time inside. Money, that his Uncle and father-figure to him promised Tasos, just before he went in. While there though, Tasos finds out that the family he once had and got completely detached from these 10 years, is now falling apart. His Uncle and head of the family has isolated himself, lost in his megalomaniac plans, his ex-wife is about to join her new partner in another town and their teenager son, unwilling to follow his mother is left behind with his Uncle. Furthermore, Tasos gets involved with another woman, an outsider like him and in conflict with the Uncle over a piece of land, which makes things even more complicated. Tasos' eagerness though to leave as soon as he gets the money, as well as his reluctance to engage with anything that has to do with his past have tragic consequences. His son gets shot in an accident, while trying to prove himself and it is only then that Tasos realizes that the price he has to pay for a new clean start is higher than what he expected.

Director's note

Through the form of a neo-western at the borders between Europe and Asia, a stylistic cross between the westerns of Eastwood and the films of Reygadas, I wish to build a story around the return of a hero to a suffocating environment. Through the magical and rough landscapes of Eastern Thrace and the "austere" Greek faces, I wish to highlight this "wild" beauty of the spaces and the characters of the people of a country in constant search of its inner salvation. Avanos talks about people under extreme pressure, in claustrophobic social environments located in wide open spaces. Male as well as female characters that continuously struggle against different social, ethical and gender values.

Producer's note

Avanos is a neo-western located at Thrace area, on the borders between Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria. A story of cause and identity acquisition. The 810K€ budget will be covered by our financing plan from a variety of sources. First of all, we have secured the national funding from the Greek Film Centre (150K€) and the National TV-ERT (110K€). Territorial funds will be claimed. Internationally, we seek for co-productions with France who are interested in new Greek cinema and Bulgaria due to local interest of the story. The financing plan is completed with the Cash Rebate program by the Greek state.

Director's bio

Panagiotis Charamis was born in Drama, Greece in 1978. He completed his BA in Film Studies at the University of Kent in 2006. In 2009, he graduated with an MA in Filmmaking from Kingston University. Since then, he has been working as a director in cinema, as well as in advertising in Athens, London and Istanbul. His first feature documentary Attention!, which he co-directed with Onur Bakir, premiered at the 35th Istanbul Film Festival in 2016, where it won the Best Documentary Award. His last short Avanos premiered at the Drama Short Film Festival in 2018, where it won 6 awards including the Best Short Award.

Producer's bio

Kostas Baliotis has an ongoing collaboration with some of the most vital film production companies in Greece, as line producer and production manager in short and feature length fiction and documentary films and TV.
As a producer started out in 2017 with the short film "Avanos" by Panagiotis Charamis and is currently developing the director's first feature film.
He has produced the short film "Apallou" by writer-director Niko Avgoustidi and, at the moment, is preparing the production of the director's next short film "Melanochaita".
At the same time he is working with director Kostas Bakouris in pre-production of the short film "Fall Christmas"

Company profile

2 Dimensions To Render (2D2R) is Kostas Baliotis' production company that undertakes the development of fiction films and documentaries from the stage of the idea till their screening. As a producer started out in 2017 with the short film "Avanos" by Panagiotis Charamis. He is currently in financing development of the feature film "Avanos" along with writer-director Panagiotis Charamis. He has produced the short film "Apallou" by writer-director Niko Avgoustidi and, at the moment, is preparing the production of the director's next short film "Melanochaita". At the same time he is working with director Kostas Bakouris in preproduction of the short film "Fall Christmas".

CHILDREN OF THE GODS

Director: **Filip Kovacevic**
Country: **Serbia**

Producers: **Vukota Antunovic, Beef Production, Djordje Stankovic, Void Pictures**

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In a large desert community that survived the collapse of a long forgotten world, one sacred ritual prompts a young man to start questioning the beliefs of his people and learn the truth about the Gods who destroyed the world of his ancestors.

SYNOPSIS

A large primitive community is struggling to survive in the barren wasteland on the outskirts of the mythical City of the Gods. The community is led by AMON, a fanatical priest who practices human sacrifice to appease the wrath of Gods and summon the promised messianic Children of the Gods. Young hunter AAKIL, although a believer, doubts the dogma ever since he saw his parents being sacrificed, leaving him to take care of his little brother ARI.

One day the village children playing in the wastelands accidentally stumble upon a strange piece of technology – a metallic casket with a mysterious young WOMAN inside. Aakil brings her back to the village where she is treated reverently. She does not know who she is and remembers her past only in cryptic fragments. She remembers though that Amon's sacred BRACELET, which can magically predict the movement of stellar bodies, once belonged to a man she presumes is her father. His last words to her: "The Children will never come."
When Ari gets chosen for the next sacrifice ritual, Aakil decides to steal Amon's Bracelet, and with the help of the Woman find the Gods in order to save his brother's life. They flee from the village with Amon's guards on their trail.

It turns out that Amon's community descended from the people who survived the collapse of the modern world and migrated from the large city in search for fertile land. The world collapsed due to overpopulation, famine and wars after a genius molecular biologist Nathaniel Hedlon invented VITA - a daily pill that indefinitely prolonged human life. Following the information they get on their journey, Sarah uses the Bracelet to lead Aakil to the colossal Arcology - the Tower that rises above the abandoned City, untouched by the collapse and inhabited by those who have the answers - fallen society's elite who took all VITA for themselves, the Gods.

Director's note

Children of the Gods is a story about our modern world that uses one plausible vision of its future to address the age old fear that hides beneath all our anxieties - the fear of death. It is an intriguing adventure that takes our main characters on the journey of discovery at the end of which they learn what happened to the forgotten 21st century world they descended from.

It is a coming-of-age story that takes the two main characters on the path of self-discovery, as they grow closer through their adventure and in the end, each of them in their own difficult way, have to personally confront and overcome the concept of death - which is something the people that caused the collapse of the modern world couldn't do.

Producer's note

CHILDREN OF THE GODS is a universal coming-of-age story that addresses the timeless theme of man's relation to mortality, while dealing with some of the current issues of the modern world, such as overpopulation, resource depletion and the gap between the rich and poor.
The project received production support from Film Center Serbia that recognized it as a unique genre project from Eastern Europe that will be geared towards the international market. After getting the national support the production team managed to cast the lead female role with Nina Kiri, a Serbian born Canadian actress who already proved herself in the dystopian sci-fi subgenre, with prominent roles in Handmaid's Tale (Alma) and See (Harmony).

Director's bio

Filip Kovacevic founded his production company "Void Pictures" in 2012 and co-wrote, produced and directed "Incarnation" in 2016. He developed the script for "Children of the Gods" with a Blacklisted LA-based screenwriter J. Daniel Shaffer. He is a member of the board for FEST, the largest international film festival in Serbia.

Producer's bio

Vukota Antunovic produced 40 music videos that generated more than 500 million views on Youtube. As a film production student, he worked as a producer on two award winning short films: "Backwards" and "Nine Days". He worked as a production manager on major Serbian film and TV productions like "The Father" and "Underneath".

Company profile

Void Pictures is a film production company based in Belgrade focused on development and production of high concept feature films geared towards the international market. The first film that was produced entirely by VOID pictures titled INCARNATION (2016) got significant international visibility. The
company recently expanded its team and is now working on the second feature film titled CHILDREN OF THE GODS that is being written by an established LA-based screenwriter with the support of Film Center Serbia and the Department for culture of the city of Belgrade.

LIGHT

Director: **Maxim Baraliuc**
Country: **Republic of Moldova**

Producer: **Ana Volosinovici, Sergiu Budici**
Production company: **MADS**

In a world shrouded in endless darkness, the only sanctuary for life is a small village sitting under a narrow beam of light. Joh - a young villager believes that his world is slowly dying, so he ventures into the dangers of the dark to save his people.

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SYNOPSIS

The world is entirely covered in darkness. Only one village remains safe under the light where people are desperately trying to survive the harsh reality. A young village boy named Joh believes that the beam of light above their home is slowly narrowing and dying out.

He is fixated on the idea that they can find a new home somewhere out there. This is met with skepticism all around him, it is believed that the darkness is dangerous and hostile, that all who venture there will never return.

The status quo ends when one day a glowing rock falls from above. It is immediately regarded as a holy sign by the villagers that strengthens their conviction but Joh sees this as a different opportunity. He uses it to begin his journey into the darkness.

Director's note

Since childhood, I am completely fascinated by the relationship between men and the unknown unfathomable concepts like eternity, death, being, etc. These mysteries evoke fear, curiosity,

and many other emotions. This creates drama which is the core element of this story.

What does a man feel like experiencing something truly larger than him? Will he survive this encounter? Will he change because of it? Can a man withstand a force of nature? All these questions are what drives my writing. It's an eternal battle between man and nature.

Producer's note

We truly believe that the horror genre is experiencing a renaissance, especially considering the environmental and space themes that are prevalent in the project. The unique point of view we provide will excite and provoke any potential viewer.

Director's bio

Maxim spent 6 years working in an animation Studio (Simpals Studio) first as a Lighting and Shading Artist then as a Layout Director and Animation Supervisor. At the same time, he has started working on indie short films as a director, which resulted in quite positive media traction in his home country. The sheer scope and ambition of his "The Message" and "Prodkommisar" projects have attracted the interest of producers and festivals in the region of Eastern Europe.
In 2018 he has decided to enroll into Toronto Film School, where he created 2 more Short Films called "The Script" and "The Kitten".
Returning home to Moldova, Max became one of the co-founders of MADS.

Producer's bio

Ana has more than 10 years of experience as a project manager working on one of the most creative projects in Moldova: "Dji Death Sails", "Dji Death Fail" and "Aripi" which had resounding success during its festival run all over the world.

LO-FI

Director: **Alican Durbaş**
Country: **Turkey**

Producer: **Ipek Erden**
Production company: **Vayka Film**

Attending TIFF:

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On a morning when everything in the apartment is packed into boxes, EMRE (29) revisits his bittersweet memories of their first days there with DEFNE (29), treading through the marks of their past relationship. By the end of the day, he finally embraces the present as he moves out and moves on.

SYNOPSIS

It seems like the first day in Emre and Defne's apartment, full of unpacked cardboard boxes. The morning light spills through the windows, covered by a half-unhinged curtain. Defne cannot find her clothes amidst the boxes and puts on a paint-stained t-shirt of Emre's. She takes down the curtains fully to let more light in. In the meantime, Emre resists waking up, wanting to continue his dreaming. In response, Defne sticks pieces of the cardboard boxes on the windows, leaving the room in full darkness. As she bores a tiny hole in the middle of one, the upside-down panorama of the exterior appears on all surfaces. Not even this magical camera obscura wakes Emre. Gazing at the birds-eye-view of the street reflected on the ceiling, Defne spots the bakery across and leaves to pick up something for breakfast. With a call from the realtor, Emre opens his eyes and for a moment, spots Defne on the ceiling. The images are wiped off suddenly, as a piece of cardboard falls from the window.

Emre slips into a warm bath following his morning routine. As Defne returns from the bakery, she finds Emre naked in their new tub. She notices the

mark left of a pale bracelet, in contrast to the rest of Emre's sunburnt skin. The bracelet that they'd gotten to keep as a memory of their vacation, still remains on Defne's wrist. She asks where Emre's is and whether he dropped it somewhere or took it off. When he states that it's only a bracelet, Defne becomes upset. Emre makes an omelet from the leftovers in the fridge, as a way to make it up to Defne. The steam rising from the sizzling pan turns into a snake-like fog covering the whole apartment. The couch in the living room appears from behind the fog, with cushions made into ceilings and walls; it has been turned into a tent. As a kid, entering his couch-tents, Emre would imagine the inside to be his home and the outside to be any world he dreamt of. Now, he finds Defne inside. As the sky darkens, the silence and melancholy of the evening weigh heavier, in contrast with the cheerful breakfast talks of the first morning. Defne messes up the cushions on top of the couch-tent and leaves the apartment to get some air.

First, the realtor arrives to put up a rental notice. Then two movers and Emre's three friends carry out all the boxes and furniture. Emre hands his friend a bag, in which Defne's few clothes and belongings remain. His friend notices that Emre doesn't have his bracelet anymore. As the crew is downstairs, Emre checks the empty apartment. He looks back one final time to see Defne with a paint bucket in her hand, painting the walls with excitement, covering the marks of a past relationship. But it is just a mirage, a memory. Emre says goodbye, leaving the apartment. He finally embraces the present as he moves out and moves on. Between the glimmering lights of other apartments, a dark, curtainless window with a rental notice on it is illuminated. The furniture and the boxes are carried into Emre's new place.

Director's note

Lo-Fi, was initially influenced by the audio-visual language of lo-fi hip-hop channels, where melodies are accompanied by anime gifs in loops. Seeking to transform this into a cinematographic language, the story of Lo-Fi is portraying a moving day of remembering and imagining someone by tracing the marks in an apartment.
In this romantic drama, I aim to narrate a past relationship that becomes lo-fi as it is remembered, over dualities such as past-present, dream-reality. I want to position the film itself in a personal place between narrative and experimental cinema, just like the in-between situation of this apartment which carries the excitement of moving in and the melancholy of moving out, both taking place in the course of a single day.

Producer's note

"Lo-Fi", a magical realist romantic drama, will be the feature film debut of Alican Durbaş. who has a strong vision and originality in artistic expression.

Our project has been selected to the Meetings on the Bridge as part of Istanbul Film Festival 2022, and at the end the Film Development Workshop we have received two awards: The TRT Special Award and SEYAP (Producers' Association) Award, which includes supporting the project with consulting through its journey.
Regarding main funding, we have received the First Feature Film Production Support from the Ministry of Culture, and are now looking for a co-producer.

Director's bio

Alican Durbaş got his master's degree from Yeditepe University Arts and Cultural Management. His short film "Soil" was screened at many international film festivals including Istanbul and Tirana.

He was a participant of the Istanbul Biennial 2019-2020 Production and Research Programme to develop his projects. With his script Tessera, he won the best screenplay award at the script

contest by Axolotl Magazine within the 39th International Istanbul Film Festival, in 2020. He just finished his short film Distant Mirror, and currently working on his first feature film project "Lo-Fi".

He has attended Talents Sarajevo in 2011 and Berlinale Talents in 2022.

Producer's bio

İpek Erden has been in the film industry since 2010, taking various roles in many major productions, both local and international, such as Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy, The Two Faces of January, Never Leave Me, The Protector.

Ipek founded her independent production company Vayka Film in 2018. As a producer, she was selected to the Sarajevo Talents 2020.

She took on the line producer role for filming in Turkey for Aftersun (2022), which won the French Jury Prize as part of the competition of Semaine de la Critique - Cannes Film Festival.
Vayka Film's first feature film A Guide to Living for the Dead, which is in post production, was selected to the Frontières Platform as part of Marché du Film 2022.

Company profile

Vayka Film was founded in 2018 in Istanbul, Turkey, by İpek Erden who has been actively working in the film industry since 2010. It is an independent production company with the aim of producing international independent films of high quality, in addition to providing production services in Turkey for various types of productions including feature films. Vayka Film is currently working on various projects at different stages.

MONARCH

Director: **Radu Mihai**
Country: **Romania**

Producer: **Livia Rădulescu**
Production company: **Dash Film**

A young man has a super-power: he can block electrical circuits. But his own power risks to over-power him, as everyone else secretly protects him.

SYNOPSIS

The film tells the story of a young man, Bogdan, aged 35, who can paralyze the electrical circuits and interrupt their operation. The phenomenon is generated by a large amount of copper present in Bogdan's blood and is activated in amplified emotional states. Apparently, he is aware of some anomalies, but has always linked them with a heart condition he was told of in childhood.

Bogdan works in the radio station of a hypermarket, making recordings about the latest promotions. His job, but also his long-term relationship with Laura, lacks suspense.
One day, the entire hypermarket has a power blackout. After a series of similar quirky events, including a strange phone call from Laura that leads Bogdan to believe she has left him, he decides to leave for his hometown.
During a mysterious road-trip, he meets several people, including a strange woman that keeps reappearing. Little by little, Bogdan discovers that it is possible that all the people around him (parents, girlfriends, friends) had as their main mission to protect him.

Bogdan eventually reaches The Lavender Veranda. It is a bed&breakfast with a large lavender field that belongs to Bogdan's childhood friend, Florin. Soon Bogdan realizes that Florin is under house arrest, and he has an electronic bracelet that prevents him from leaving the house. He is also doing a VR rehab program, with

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an avatar he talks to every day, a therapist. Later, Florin discovers that the bracelet doesn't when Bogdan is close. He's very happy to have a chance to briefly escape. It reminds Bogdan of their childhood speculations about superpowers.

They decide to go in a near village at a fair: Bogdan, Florin, his wife Ioana, and their two kids. At the fair there's a little incident and one of the kids gets lost. Florin is trying to run after the kid to find him, but as he is getting away from Bogdan the bracelet is reactivated.
They decide to run and Bogdan and Florin pedal angrily on the road. In an elated state and after being provoked by Bogdan, Florin confesses everything to him, that he knew from an early age about his power, and that most people in his life were involved in this.
A car is approaching, the strange woman signals them to stop. Bogdan gets angry and the car next to him stops. On the wires on the side of the road there is a voltaic arc, the lights go out in the distance to the houses. Florin begs him to stop. But to no avail.

Later, Bogdan is in a room with the strange woman who, in fact, is a police Investigator. He asks her to release his friend. She tells him that she agrees if Bogdan stays in his hometown, where he can have the chance to calm down. Bogdan asks if he can see Laura.
In a virtual room are the avatars of Bogdan, Florin, Ioana, Laura and the Investigator. It seems like a kind of group therapy or control session is about to begin.

Director's note

The film I propose is a step on a path less explored in Romanian cinema: the story of a superhero. Moreover, my approach is to tell this story in a style that avoids the conventions of the genre and proposes a (supra) realistic approach to it. The film is a postmodern fairy tale in which the reconstruction of reality is no longer a stake, but a pretext for telling a visual story that surprises through its own paradoxical nature. I see it as a surreal comedy with notes of warm humour and benevolent irony, in which the interest is not in exploring a fantastic and supernatural world, but rather in investigating the point of contact between the known rational and logical world and the one perceived by sensations, emotions and perceptions.

Producer's note

For me, the appeal of Monarch comes from several layers at which it can open up. On the one hand, the film tells the simple and potentially comic story of someone who is limited by his own power. Of course, it is not entirely clear who sets those limits, but feeling trapped in our own skin is something we can all relate to. The protagonist's relationship to his super-power plays out in a mysterious setting, which comes to the very limit of the absurd before making a swift return to reality. The constant oscillation between the real and the imaginary is natural, without shocking with classicized images of the fantastic, because the supernatural is claimed by strange phenomena that happen next to us, but they have very rational explanations.

Director's bio

After 10 years spent in advertising and publishing, Radu took a leap of faith and became a film director. Since then he directed several short films and commercials. His short films were selected in more than 20 International Festivals, including Clermont-Ferrand, Vila do Conde, Busan, Vilnius, Cairo and others. Now he is developing his first feature film.

Producer's bio

Livia came into film production in 2016 from a background of ten years of management roles in social entrepreneurship, creative industries, and

cultural management. As development producer, executive producer, Livia produced features and shorts including "Balaur" (2021, dir: Octav Chelaru - Thessaloniki IFF, Transylvania IFF, prod: deFilm, 42Film, EED), "The Story of a Summer Lover" (2018, dir: Paul Negoescu – PÖFF, prod: N-Graphix), "Balck Clothes" (2017, dir: Octav Chelaru, Locarno IFF, prod: deFilm). Across her roles, she enjoys bringing her varied interests and background into her passion for film and the arts. She graduated in Economics and has a Masters degree at the London School of Economics in 2008.

Company profile

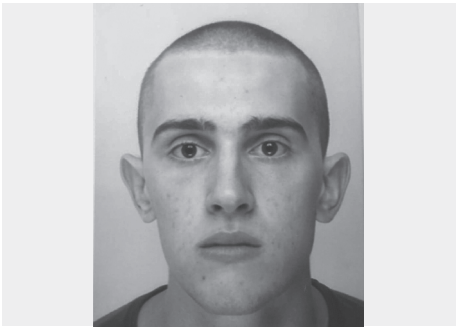
Dash Film is a film production company established in 2010, devoted to independent and emerging films, searching for new ways to satisfy the appetite for cinema of its founders. Our mission is to create a strong bond between our passion for cinema and the stories that burst in reality.

PSYCHO-SEXUAL THOUGHTS

Director: **Bálint Bagossy**
Country: **Hungary**

Producer: **Mónika Mécs**
Production company: **M&M Film studio**

Attending TIFF:



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This film's dramaturgy is based on the dramaturgy of a female orgasm. It is not fake!

SYNOPSIS

Inspired by Milán Füst's book of essays of the same title, Psycho-Sexual Thoughts is an episodic feature film in which characters in five different locations, at five different stages of their lives, talking about sexuality and relationship problems. First, we witness the dialogue between a young boy and his coach in a swimming pool where they are watching the synchronized swimmers's exercise, later we see the sex struggles of a couple of activist lovers in the office of the university they occupy, and then the car breakdown of a family returning from holiday brings to the surface the relationship conflicts they have been suppressing. In the fourth scene, a man at the end of the midlife crisis makes the last confession of love of his life to an infinitely repulsive woman, and finally, an exhausted old couple in the desert try to recall their last sexual encounter together without success. Although, unlike the essay of Milán Füst's, the film would not offer a solution to the problems of sexuality, it would hopefully help the viewer in discussing these taboo themes.

Director's note

This film is an anthology film, which consists of 10-20 minute scenes designed for an hour and a half of running time. The episodes connected by the topic of sexuality, and sexual-psychology.

Also there is a soft connection between the characters, as the first scene in the swimming pool works like an enumeration - all of the later protagonists appearing at least for a sentence, or in the background. The aim is to find a good balance between tragical and comical, with humour that sometimes verges on the absurd and drama that borders on the melodramatic.

Producer's note

The production is designed to super low-budget as we can't expect funding from the Hungarian National Film Institute. Besides the available financial support of the FreeSZFE Foundation (9.000 EUR) the M&M production company is aiming to add private funds to the director's promising first feature film project. We also take into account the 30% tax refund in the Hungarian film production. The total production costs are estimated at 50.000 EUR. Due to the small crew, the limited number of locations and the available favours in case of a first film we are able to lower the usual costs. The actors and the main crew members are already fixed and ready to start the pre-production process.

Director's bio

Bagossy Bálint is a Hungarian film director. He studied at SZFE, University of Theatre and Film Arts Budapest until 2021, when the Hungarian government decided to change the leadership of the university and the students occupied the building to demonstrate against the talentless and politically committed new leaders. The protest was unsuccessful, however, approximately half of the students left SZFE with their teachers, and they founded the FreeSZFE Association to help those who did not want to be part of an antidemocratic institution. Bálint was an important participant of the occupation, and he is still committed to FreeSZFE.
Now he finished a short film about a fictional tribe, and in January he started preparing a documentary in Sudan.

Producer's bio

Mónika Mécs is a Hungarian film producer, and the founder of Inforg-M&M Film production company. In 2012 she won the Jury Grand Prix at the 62nd Berlin International Film Festival with Just the Wind, directed by Benedek Fliegauf. The film was selected as the Hungarian entry for the Best Foreign Language Oscar at the 85th Academy Awards, but it did not make the final shortlist. In 2017 she won the Golden Bear in the main competition section of the 67th Berlin International Film Festival with the Hungarian drama film On Body and Soul, directed by Ildikó Enyedi. She won further prizes with On Body and Soul; such as the FIPRESCI prize and the Prize of the Ecumenical Jury. The film was also nominated for the Oscar at the 90th Academy Awards.

Company profile

Inforg-M&M Film is a Budapest based, independent film production company, established in 2010 by producers András Muhi and Mónika Mécs – former leaders of INFORG STUDIO and M&M Film. The company's aim is to produce arthouse movies and commercial feature films but also gives opportunity for documentaries, short films, animations and any kind of extreme genres. More here: https://inforg-mm-film.hu/

SASHA-OLEKSANDA

Director: **Andrii Ivaniuk**
Country: **Ukraine**

Producer: **Volodymyr Filippov**
Production company: **Insightmedia**

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Wanting to have a full-fledged family with children and learning about her pregnancy, Sasha tries to leave the child, under any circumstances. Even though her husband, a law enforcement officer, is categorically against that and does everything to have no children.

SYNOPSIS

Sasha is married to Olexander, a cruel police officer, and completely depends on him. She was even forced to give up her own career. All the time she wants to please him and wants only one thing - to have a child. Realizing that this is her last chance, Sasha decides to go against to Olexander and stop taking pills to protect against pregnancy. Sasha is pregnant, and she is afraid to tell about it. Because she has no one she can trust. Her parents love Olexander, and her only friend is sleeping with him. But on the day of the violent dispersal of the Maidan, Olexander learns about his wife's pregnancy. He beats her, and she loses her child. It all ends with Sasha killing Olexander, and the court sentences Sasha to prison.

Director's note

War begins with domestic violence.
At the beginning of the Revolution on Maidan, I was one of the illegally detained students. I was shocked by the violence of the police, so I imagined how such cruel people behave in the family circle. Unfortunately, domestic violence is known all over the world, also. Thousands of women are victims of domestic violence, but only a few find the strength to say so. Moreover, a law enforcement officer, a person who should protect against the violence, is the one causing it.
With my film, I want to show what silence can lead to. The purpose of the film is to show the problem and encourage women to fight it. Viewers must feel this scary atmosphere that surrounds them.

Producer's note

Domestic violence is a horror of our time. A person can neither escape nor hide from cruelty. The events in Ukraine have shown the horrific scale of violence, and it starts with the family. And even worse, when this violence is committed by a police officer, a person who must protect everyone. The relevance of the story is that it is a story about the unlimited power of one person over another, about bullying in the family. Our audience is primarily women, as well as couples - they need to see what it is. Our film is also a festival film. We expect to apply to Sundance, Berlinale, TIFF, Toronto. We hope that our film will interest festivals related to violations of women's and human rights.

Director's bio

Andy Iva was born in a small town Bytkiv in Ukraine. He graduated as an actor, theater director and then as a film director. When Andy graduated from his second university as a theater director, the war on Ukrainian Donbas began. So he went to defend Ukraine. It was 2014. After that, he wrote and directed the feature film "Eastman" about ordinary people, who defend Ukraine and try to live in such difficult obstacles. The premiere of Eastman was at the Odessa International Film Festival. Also Andy Iva writes plays. The play "Blood and gold" was published in the almanac of mono plays in 2016. The play "Extremist" is about EuroMaidan, became a finalist of Poland International Festival "Aurora" in the city Begodj.

Producer's bio

Volodymyr Filippov is an Ukrainian film producer and artist, co-founder of the production company "Insight Media". His career began with film distribution at the end of the Soviet Union era: Volodymyr organized a screening in the USSR "Black Rose - an emblem of sorrow, red rose - an emblem of love", "Taxi Blues".
Known for his participation in such projects as: "Who Who Passed Through the Fire" (2011) The film "Who Who Passed Through the Fire" was officially nominated by the Ukrainian Oscar Committee for the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, and was nominated for a long list of nominees; "Ivan Sila" (2013) "Dove's Nest" (2016), "Red" (2017), Strimgolov (2017), Hoarfrost (2017), The Gate (2017).

Company profile

Insight Media is Ukrainian film production company focused on quality storytelling, striking visuals. The combined experience of the in-house team covers award-winning feature films, TV series, music videos, short films and documetary films. Insight Media makes content from the development to distribution. The first such film was the film "Firecrosser" by Mykhailo Ilyenko, which entered the TOP 10 of the Ukrainian box office and was nominated for the American Film Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Over the past ten years, the studio has made more than 16 feature films and is one of the leaders in national cinema.

WHERE ELEPHANTS GO?

Director: **Gabi Șarga, Cătălin Rotaru**
Country: **Romania**

Producer: **Gabriela Suciu-Pădureț**
Production company: **Atelier de Film**

A mother, who prostitutes herself for her cancer-stricken daughter, finds love with a confused and depressed young man.

SYNOPSIS

Leni is a little girl who realizes that whatever she does, her destiny is already written by someone else. No matter how much she fights for her life, she can't change the disease that is wearing her out. Her mother, who prostitutes herself for her cancer-stricken daughter, finds love with a confused and depressed young man, Marcel. Marcel is a misfit, a marginal. He refuses to work, he refuses to integrate in society. He lives on the charity of others. He is 24 years old and has no biography. Or, better said, he has multiple invented biographies, which are inspired by famous fictions. In a world where there's little left to control, they will all influence each other greatly.

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Director's note

This film focuses on the dialogue between the real and the fictional and discusses the boundary between the two. Like the main characters in this film, each of us lives a story, the outcome of which we know. But we do not know the meaning of the story, and here comes in the anxiety and the source of our worries. But we have the freedom to "tell" it to ourselves the way we want, we being the authors of our own fiction.
But what do you do when you refuse to participate

in this huge existing fiction? What solutions do you have when you do not accept any solution because they are either precarious, or false, or subtly accommodating? What do you do when you can't find a final, definitive explanation for your reason for living?

Producer's note

The title of the film points towards this fatidic message over the whole narrative, that there's only one place where all ends and like puppeteered by a deus ex-machina our lives sometimes go beyond our power to change things. This film comes with a tone and message so important in these unprecedented times we are facing where time seems to play with our lives and we don't have a security for tomorrow. Where Elephants Go offers a fresh perspective on what matters in life nowadays and despite the tragic elements, what is truly delightful about the film is its loopy, gently slapstick sense of humor, its use of continuous running gags that pay off cumulatively, and the uplifting connection in the end.

Director's bio

Cătălin and Gabi Virginia have a large experience in the film and television
industry, working as screenwriters and directors for more than 10 TV series. Their first fiction short film, "4:15 PM the End of the World" premiered in the Official Competition of Cannes Film Festival. Their co-directed first feature, "Thou Shalt Not Kill" premiered in Warsaw Film Festival and had an intensive festival track record around the globe, winning a Special Jury award in Indie Lisboa Film Festival in 2019.

Producer's bio

Gabi Suciu attended the prestigious UNATC Film Faculty in Bucharest graduating with a BA in Directing, an MA in Production and a PhD in Film & Media. With over 12 years experience, she consistently produces up to 8 titles a year, all lengths, genres and formats. She continued her training in Emerging Strategies in Film Distribution and Marketing in Berlin in 2012, where her previous studies in Computer Science, married to her knack for filmmaking led her to understand the needs of the market and the fast and continuous change that can influence a marketing campaign, thus starting a parallel new adventure to film production: film distribution and marketing. She is currently a lecturer at the film production masters at UNATC.

Company profile

Green Cat Film was established in 2017 in Bucharest, Romania, by Catalin Rotaru and Virginia Sarga. Catalin and Virginia have a large experience in film and television industry, working as screenwriters and directors for more than 10 TV series, a feature film and a short movie. ,,Thou Shalt Not Kill" was the first feature film that Green Cat Film produced, it premiered in Warsaw Film Festival and was picked up for distribution by Indie Sales France. The company works in a close relationship with other Romanian production companies, bringing the talent to the know-how table and always helping in creating good quality projects.

The 10 projects are competing for the awards kindly provided by our industry partners:

The Chainsaw Europe post-production award
25.000 Eur in post-production services

The TPS Development award, offered by Avanpost
in the amount of 5.000 Eur

The CNC Moldova award
in the amount of 1.500 Eur

The VILLA KULT Development award
in the amount of 500 Eur

The CoCo Award
five day residency offered by Connecting Cottbus Co-Production Market

Oscar Alonso (Latido Films), **Patra Spanou** (Patra Spanou Film) and **Yohann Cornu** (Damned Films)are the members of the international jury who will hand out the awards.

For info about TPS, contact us: **tps@tiff.ro**

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PITCH STOP